

For Immediate Release

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Mentoring Program Improves Teachers' English Skills, Students' Literacy and Numeracy

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Kigali—New results of a national survey show that the Rwanda Education Board's (REB) School-based Mentoring Program has had a positive effect on teachers' English language skills and student learning across the country.

The mentoring program places a mentor at two schools to provide continuous professional development to teachers in English language and teaching practice. Since 2012, more than 800 mentors have enlisted in the program, benefiting more than 1,600 schools.

In 2014, mentors conducted a national survey of teachers' English language skills. The survey was developed by REB with the support of the Literacy, Language, and Learning (L3) Initiative, a program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that is implemented by the Education Development Center. As part of the survey, mentors administered an initial test in February 2014 to determine teachers' English language levels, inform teacher training, and set goals for teachers' improvement. In October 2014, mentors administered a follow-up test to measure teachers' progress over the year.

Results showed that 88 percent of the 26,800 teachers who participated improved their English language skills by at least one level in a range from 1 to 5. In February, 68 percent of teachers surveyed scored either a 1 or 1+ on the test. By October, only 14 percent were in the 1 and 1+ range, while 73 percent scored 2 or 2+, and 13 percent scored higher, showing steady progress.

Mentors also support teachers in their use of new methods and materials, including new print and audio materials for P1, P2, and P3 Kinyarwanda, mathematics, and English, developed by REB and USAID's L3 Initiative. All of the materials include new teacher guides, student reading books, story collections, and audio lessons, played using cell phones and portable speakers. The mentors are able to support teachers who may be unfamiliar with these resources.

"We are proud to see the progress made by REB's School-based Mentoring Program that was launched to support teachers in becoming proficient and confident in English language and new teaching methodologies to ultimately impact student learning," says REB Director General Janvier Gasana. "We must continue to build on this success and emphasize the importance of continuous professional development in ensuring quality education."

Over the coming weeks, REB will be sharing photos and testimonials from mentors on its social media, highlighting the role mentors play in quality education in Rwanda.